

Chapter 15 - Demolition - FINAL

Demolition

It is the intent of the demolition section of the Design Review Guidelines to ensure that property owners consider the role that existing buildings play in defining the community's character. In addition, certain buildings possess individual significance as examples of specific architectural styles and periods in the City's history. Williamsburg has experienced a high level of demolition activity last since 1927 that significantly altered certain areas' character in the community. As a result of the restoration of the Colonial Capitol, the City's redevelopment efforts, and continuing development pressures on land adjacent to the Historic Area, demolition has removed a sizeable portion of the City's post-Colonial era historic fabric.

Historic resources, which are especially threatened, are from the City's depleted supply of Victorian and early 20th-century buildings. These non-colonial historic buildings contribute to the City's character and are evidence of the City's evolutionary process between the colonial period and the present time.

A 1930 survey and building map illustrates the level of demolition and redevelopment in the areas surrounding the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Area. It is not known how many buildings existed before 1930 in the area now known as the Historic Area were lost to make the restoration project possible. Redevelopment pressures and demolition resulting from neglect continue to threaten the City's remaining 19th-century and early 20th-century historic buildings. The following table provides detail on the location and numbers of structures that have been demolished since the survey.

AREA	TOTAL STRUCTURES	TOTAL STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN	% LOST	TOTAL STRUCTURES LOST BREAKDOWN
Virginia Avenue, Richmond Road, North Boundary Street, and the CSX Railroad right-of-way	286	156 Residential 24 Commercial 106 Accessory	84%	119 Residential 21 Commercial 101 Accessory
The Peacock Hill area (Boundary Street, Prince George Street, Nassau Street over to Lafayette Street)	123	61 Residential 62 Accessory	78%	37 Residential 59 Accessory
South Boundary Street, Ireland Street, and South Henry Street	56	35 Residential 21 Accessory	68%	17 Residential 21 Accessory
Colonial Extension Subdivision	30	30 Residential	70%	21 Residential
York Street	No Data Available	No Data Available	100%	No Data Available

Chapter 15 - Demolition - FINAL

The Architectural Review Board reviews all proposals to demolish buildings in the Architectural Preservation Districts. Before submitting a request for demolition of a building listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter 4), it is recommended that property owners analyze the situation carefully and explore alternatives to demolition. Depending on the building's condition and the nature of the intended land use, property owners should consider the potential of the building for rehabilitation. Many historic buildings are suitable for adaptive reuse projects, and the Rehabilitation (Chapter 13) section of the Design Review Guidelines outlines this process. The Architectural Review Board may make recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals for exceptions to standard yard requirements, off-street parking requirements, and open space and landscape requirements, for buildings within a review district in older neighborhoods which do not meet current zoning requirements.

If relocation is determined to be necessary as the only means of preserving the building, then property owners should refer to the Relocation (Chapter 14) section of the Design Review Guidelines.

If, after every other option is considered, the property owner still wishes to demolish the building, the procedures outlined in the Architecture Review Article of the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 16, Appendix 6) must be followed. The applicant must apply to the Architectural Review Board for the right to demolish the building. At this time, if the building is listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter 4), the

applicant shall submit interior and exterior photographs of the building and site to the Planning Department, or the property owner shall allow the City access to the property to photograph the building and site. It is recommended that the applicant contact the Planning Department for available information on the property to avoid duplicate reporting.

Many factors need to be weighed by the Architectural Review Board when reviewing requests for demolition in Architectural Preservation Districts, many of which are listed in Section 21-855(c) of the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 16, Appendix 6). These factors include:

1. Whether or not the building or neighborhood in which it is located is listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (Chapter 4).
2. The historic and architectural value of the building.
3. The effect the demolition will have on the surrounding neighborhood.
4. The type and quality of the project that will replace the building.
5. The Comprehensive Plan's goals for historic preservation.
6. The condition of the building.
7. The economic feasibility of restoring the building.

The Board must strike the proper balance between preserving buildings that make important contributions to the history and character of the City, the surrounding neighborhood, and allowing for new development in Architectural Preservation Districts. A listing of buildings in the Architectural Preservation

Chapter 15 - Demolition - FINAL

Districts that are contributing to the district has been compiled to assist the Board in its deliberations (Chapter 4).

If the Architectural Review Board denies the demolition request, the applicant may appeal to the City Council. If demolition is denied by the City Council, the property owner has the right to demolish the building if no buyer has been found for the property within the stipulated time period after a bonafide effort has been made to sell the property under the procedures outlined in Section 21-858(a)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 16, Appendix 6). An alternative to this process is for the applicant to appeal the City Council's decision to the Circuit Court.